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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 115: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/46/370 and A/46/377; A/C.5/46/2, 4 and Add.1, 7, 9, 13, 16 and 21)

1. Mr. AYEWAH (Nigeria) said that the capacity of the United Nations to respond to the challenges arising as a result of the recent dramatic changes in the international scene would increasingly depend on the Organization's ability to secure and retain the services of staff of the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.

2. While it was encouraging that the number of unrepresented States had decreased from 11 to 9 between 1 July 1990 and 30 June 1991, his delegation felt that much still needed to be done to address the imbalance in the staffing table. Accordingly he urged the Secretariat to step up its efforts to that end and welcomed the assurances that an active and systematic recruitment policy would be conducted to identify high-quality candidates, particularly in unrepresented and underrepresented countries. There was no lack of such candidates in every country, and special attention should be given to the developing countries, particularly African countries. He noted that the proportion of staff from developing countries occupying posts at the D-2 level and above had risen from 43.1 per cent in 1990 to 44.2 per cent in 1991, while the proportion of staff from other countries had fallen from 56.9 per cent to 55.8 per cent over the same period (A/46/377, annex II, table C). The positive trend should be maintained until there was an equitable distribution of posts at that level. In that connection he trusted that the Secretariat would keep in mind the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/185 A, paragraph 3, to the effect that no post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any Member State or group of States.

3. With respect to the report of the Secretary-General on alternative options for desirable ranges (A/C.5/46/2), his delegation agreed that the problem lay not in the methodology but, rather, in the relative weight to be given to the various factors, and preferred option K, referred to in paragraph 32 of the report, whereby the weight of the membership factor remained unchanged, while the weight of the population factor was increased and that of the contribution factor was reduced. Every effort should be made to bring all Member States within their desirable ranges.

4. The question of the representation of women remained an important issue to his delegation, which appreciated the considerable efforts made to achieve the targets set by the General Assembly, and, in particular, the special emergency measures taken by the Secretariat to that end. It was encouraging to note the increases in the proportion of women in geographical posts, as well as in posts at the D-1 level and above. Regrettably, the percentage of women from the African region was still far below the 30 per cent target. While there had been a minor increase in 1991, additional steps needed to be taken to increase their representation.

(Mr. Ayewah, Nigeria)

5. It was equally significant to note that progress had been made in the area of career development, especially for staff in the General Service category. His delegation agreed that a deliberate effort must be made to systematically update the substantive knowledge of Secretariat staff, as well as to strengthen their ability to deliver programmes and increase their interchangeability, so that they could cope with the challenges confronting the Organization in the 1990s. Further, the recommendations contained in document A/46/326 on the rotation of staff within the United Nations should be given due consideration with a view to implementing them. Rotation of staff should not, however, replace the employment of new staff where necessary in order to promote efficiency. In that connection his delegation opposed any proliferation of posts designed simply to cater to the career expectations of staff, particularly given the resource constraints under which the Organization was operating.

6. His delegation had given serious consideration to the views of the staff representatives (A/C.5/46/21) and acknowledged that most of the views were well founded, but also wished to underscore the expectation of Member States that the productivity and dedication of staff should be consistent with the purposes and objectives of the Organization.

7. Mr. TISLER (Czechoslovakia) said that the increasingly important role of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security had placed new and greater demands on the staff of the Organization. His delegation was well aware of the fact that United Nations staff must often carry out their duties under difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions. In that connection his delegation was concerned by the facts mentioned in document A/C.5/46/4, dealing with respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations, and hoped that consideration of the report would help to solve the problems which had jeopardized the lives of United Nations staff members in the discharge of their duties.

8. Discussion in the Committee had shown that further steps to strengthen and streamline the staff structure were needed. In that connection account should be taken of the recommendations of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts that the competence and experience of the staff must be primary considerations in recruitment and promotion procedures. The staff should be recruited on as wide a geographical basis as possible, and new vacancies should be filled through open examinations, such as the national competitive examinations, which represented an objective method of recruitment. His delegation supported the creation of a competitive recruitment examination for the P-2 and P-3 levels. Consideration should also be given to the possibility of establishing a "time in grade" limit for Professional staff, with the aim of eliminating less competent staff members. In 1991 national competitive examinations had been held in Prague for Czechoslovak citizens, and his delegation looked forward to the prompt recruitment of the candidates selected.

(Mr. Tisler, Czechoslovakia)

9. As a result of the democratic changes in Czechoslovakia, a new approach had emerged to the question of Czechoslovak nationals working in the United Nations Secretariat. In February 1991 the Federal Government had adopted a decree removing any possible inconsistency between those citizens' rights and duties under existing Czechoslovak law and their status as independent international civil servants. Czechoslovakia was one of those countries which had used a system of secondment and intended to continue to make use of that practice in the future, since it was beneficial both to the Organization and its Member States. His delegation thought that review of documents A/C.5/46/9 and A/C.5/45/12, relating to future secondment procedures, should produce a simple procedure, one that would eliminate any possible misunderstanding. The procedure should be transparent and easy to understand, and should not restrict the role of Member States in personnel questions. His delegation was prepared to cooperate in reaching a consensus to that end. In that spirit he wished to receive clarification of how the new procedure proposed would be applied to those staff members who had been serving on secondment under the previous arrangement. In the interim period, before the new procedure was applied, the practice followed by the Secretariat in some specific cases had not been in conformity with the existing rules. In that connection his delegation fully associated itself with the remarks made by the representative of Poland.

10. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Arab Maghreb Union, said that according to the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/46/7), staff expenditures for the biennium 1992-1993 would amount to at least $2,105.5 million. The report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/46/370) stated that the total number of staff of the United Nations was 29,246, of whom 13,973 were assigned to the Secretariat. The mobilization and management of such a large staff was of considerable importance to both the United Nations and Member States. Of the 13,973 Secretariat posts, only 2,600 were subject to geographic distribution. That was a very low proportion; the General Assembly should apply the principle of geographical distribution to a greater number of posts, whether financed from the regular budget or from extrabudgetary resources. Document A/46/370 indicated that staff in posts subject to geographical distribution were directly appointed by the Secretary-General for at least one year to posts in the Professional category and above. However, not all such posts were subject to geographical distribution. The States members of the Arab Maghreb Union believed that as many posts as possible in those categories should be subject to the principle of geographical distribution and that consideration also should be given to the possibililty of applying the same principle to posts in other categories. The subsidiary bodies of the United Nations which enjoyed special status and appointed their own staff should respect the general principle of geographical distribution.

11. The States of the Arab Maghreb Union were grateful to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and his Office for their efforts to reduce the number of unrepresented and underrepresented States by

(Mr. Zahid, Morocco)

holding national competitions and sending recruitment missions, and hoped that those efforts would be extended to Arab States which continued to be unrepresented or underrepresented.

12. Another key issue was the representation of developing countries in posts at the senior and policy-making levels of the Secretariat. Accordingly, it was encouraging to note the slight increase in the number of senior posts held by developing countries. The Secretariat should be urged to intensify its efforts to ensure the more equitable representation of developing countries, particularly African countries, which were the most disadvantaged. The Secretariat should offer shorter periods of service for senior posts to allow for the periodic rotation of heads of Secretariat departments and offices and the more equitable redistribution of posts. The principle enunciated in General Assembly resolution 35/210 to the effect that no post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any Member State, or group of States, should be applied strictly. The Arab Maghreb Union also believed that the different legal systems should be represented in the Secretariat. He recalled General Assembly resolution 45/239 A in that connection and urged that every effort be made to reach that objective.

13. With regard to the representation of women, while commendable progress had been made, the percentages continued to be below the figures established by the General Assembly. Accordingly, he urged the Secretariat to continue its efforts to attain the established objectives, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and the Staff Rules, particularly with respect to promotions.

14. According to the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/46/2, the method currently used for the geographical distribution of posts was adequate, but there were problems regarding the relative weight to be assigned to the various factors. There was no doubt that changing the weight of the three factors (membership, population and contribution) would make the existing system more equitable.

15. The representatives of the States members of the Arab Maghreb Union urged that the preparation of a general career development plan should be pursued more vigorously in order to increase the motivation of the Organization's staff, which was all the more necessary at a time when the United Nations was being called upon to play a more active role in many fields, including peace-keeping, economic and social development, drug abuse control, the environment and human rights. In order to retain the best qualified individuals on the United Nations staff, as required by the Charter, greater career development opportunities must be made available to them. It was important to prepare the report requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/185, and again at the forty-fifth session, on the review of rules, regulations and criteria used for the promotion of staff, efforts to ensure transparency in the work of the appointment and promotion bodies and the inclusion of effective and expeditious appeal and recourse mechanisms in

(Mr. Zahid, Morocco)

the vacancy management programme. The representatives of the Secretariat should provide appropriate explanations in that regard. Furthermore, training and advanced training were very important factors, and the relevant activities should be expanded.

16. The administration of justice in the Secretariat was a question which merited close attention. The report of the Secretary-General on the subject, which was essentially descriptive in nature, did not deal with the real problems pertaining to the administration of justice in the Secretariat. It was to be hoped that the report which the Secretary-General would submit to the General Assembly at its next session would include specific measures to improve the administration of justice system in the Secretariat, bearing in mind, inter alia, the deficiencies noted in the functioning of the Committee on Applications for Review of Administrative Tribunal Judgements.

17. A completely independent international civil service was inconceivable unless respect for the privileges and immunities inherent therein was assured. In that connection, he expressed his concern at the illegal acts perpetrated against certain international officials engaged in carrying out their duties. The Secretary-General and Member States should endeavour to ensure the safety and protection of United Nations staff and their families and provide them with the assistance they required. For their part, international officials should discharge their functions in strict compliance with the mandate entrusted to them and the legislation of the host countriy.

18. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) stressed the importance of respect by Member State for the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials. In view of the changes taking place in the world and the tasks entrusted to the United Nations in the new world order, that importance was steadily increasing. Egypt shared the Secretary-General's concern at the large number of violations of the privileges and immunities of international staff, as shown in document A/C.5/46/4. That document contained details about officials of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East detained in or deported from the West Bank or Gaza Strip, but the authorities which had committed those violations were not identified as had been done in the case of other Member States (for example, in paras. 3 and 4, of annex II to the report). In that connection, mention should also be made of document A/C.5/46/21, containing the views of the staff representatives, which included lists of staff members whose rights and privileges had been violated. There were surprising discrepancies between the details given in that report and in the Secretary-General's report on the same subject. He asked the Secretariat to provide the General Assembly with an explanation at the current session and to correct the deficiencies in its report.

19. On the composition of the Secretariat, he said that the evolution of the role of the United Nations should be accompanied by greater interest in the Organization's human resources. It would be important to take steps for the equitable distribution of posts subject to geographical distribution, in

(Mr. Eldeeb, Egypt)

particular by giving greater weight to the population factor, which had in the past accounted for a greater percentage than it did at present. In that connection, his delegation was gratified to note the Secretariat's considerable efforts to present various options and said that Egypt supported option J in paragraph 32 of the report (A/C.5/46/2). The implementation of that option could lay the foundation for a more equitable procedure for the distribution of posts.

20. In a different connection, he said that Egypt welcomed the report of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management to the Fifth Committee, in which he had said that the Secretariat was preparing proposals for a career development system. He looked forward to a report to the General Assembly on that topic.

21. Mr. SY (Senegal) said that his country had deep respect for the privileges and immunities of international officials, which imposed specific obligations on Member States and on the officials themselves. The former must take care to see that those privileges and immunities were fully respected and the latter must refrain from abusing them in order to enjoy impunity for activities unconnected with their professional duties. It was important to have a clear definition of the concept of an "international official" in order to prevent too wide or abusive an interpretation. In General Assembly resolution 45/240, the Secretary-General was requested, in compiling information for incorporation into the reports on that subject, to include, to the extent possible, the views of Member States on cases of the violation of privileges and immunities for which they might be responsible. Respect for that recommendation would allow the Fifth Committee to make a better evaluation of the matters drawn to its attention.

22. On the composition of the Secretariat, his delegation would like to see the activities designed to remedy the situation of unrepresented or underrepresented States continued and intensified. It also urged the Secretary-General, when recruiting staff, to continue to bear in mind the principle of equitable geographical distribution, which was perfectly compatible with the need to provide the Organization with officials having the highest qualifications, competence and integrity. He also stressed the Secretary-General's obligation to ensure respect for established procedures in the preparation and issuing of vacancy announcements.

23. The representation of women in the Secretariat continued to be a matter of concern, despite the corrective action taken by the Secretary-General. The rate of 29.2 per cent in June 1991, as against 26.3 per cent in June 1990, was a considerable improvement but the target of 30 per cent by the end of 1990 had still not been reached. At the current rate, there was a risk that the 35 per cent target set for 1995 would not be attained. Nor had there been sufficient progress in the appointment of women to posts at the D-1 level and above. His delegation recalled the General Assembly's decision, in paragraph 6 of its resolution 45/239 C, whereby the Secretary-General was

(Mr. Sy, Senegal)

requested to develop an action programme for the advancement of women in the Secretariat. The Canadian delegation's assistance towards the fulfilment of that commitment was commendable; that generous example should be followed by other countries with a view to preventing further delay in the preparation of that important programme, which should contain specific measures to remedy the inadequate representation of women from certain Member States, the African countries in particular. The programme should also contain an in-depth analysis of existing Secretariat machinery in order to determine whether it was adequate and effective for the implementation of the programme. The effects of the programme would to a large extent depend on the system for the representation of Member States, and thus on desirable ranges.

24. On the question of desirable ranges, he agreed with the Secretary-General that the solution to the problem lay not in the adoption of a new methodology for determining desirable ranges but rather in making careful adjustments in the various parameters that were used in order to ensure a geographical distribution more in keeping with the spirit of the Charter. Too marked an imbalance between the percentages corresponding to the factors that determined the desirable ranges would be prejudicial to the task of building a new world order based on the equality of States and shared responsibilities. Accordingly, Senegal preferred option J, but could accept option F if that would make it possible to reach a consensus.

25. He considered the amendments to the Staff Regulations annexed to document A/C.5/46/9 acceptable in principle, although he had some doubts about the paragraph (c) which it was proposed to add to annex II of the Staff Regulations. The validity of a secondment from national government service could not be determined without taking into account the relevant national legislative provisions. He would therefore like more details regarding the content of that paragraph. The question of secondment should also be examined in the light of the provisions of paragraph 10 of resolution 45/239 A, in which the Secretary-General was requested to consider measures in order to ensure, to the extent possible, the representation of the main legal systems in the Secretariat.

26. On the question of the administration of justice in the Secretariat, he said that his delegation's recent participation in the work of the Committee on Applications for Review of Administrative Tribunal Judgements led it to question that body's effectiveness. The Committee consisted of the members of the General Committee of the General Assembly, which changed every year except for the permanent members of the Security Council. That raised a problem of continuity and effectiveness, since most of the Committee's members never succeeded in fully grasping its rules and procedures. The Committee's mandate was very limited in that the representatives of Member States were not empowered to decide on the substance of the judgements questioned and were confined to responding to a series of rigidly formulated questions. That was perhaps why the Committee had requested an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice only three times since it had been

(Mr. Sy, Senegal)

established. While that situation was in part justified by a desire to avoid the Committee being converted into an appeals body, its method of operation needed to be improved.

27. Mr. BELKHEIR (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/46/370), posts subject to geographical distribution remained a small percentage of the total. For that reason, the principles determining the number of such posts must be reviewed. The fact that nine Member States were unrepresented was a cause for concern and that situation should be remedied immediately. Nationals of overrepresented Member States were still being recruited; that constituted a failure to observe the spirit of the Charter and the resolutions of the General Assembly. In its resolution 45/239 A, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to take every available measure to ensure, at the senior and policy-formulating levels of the Secretariat, the equitable representation of Member States, in particular of developing countries and Member States with inadequate representation at those levels, and to include relevant information in future reports on the composition of the Secretariat. Despite that, developing countries continued to be inadequately represented at senior levels of the Secretariat and certain countries were still monopolizing some posts.

28. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was one developing country that was underrepresented, especially at the senior level, despite having submitted many candidates. The Secretariat had made many promises that it had not kept. Although he acknowledged the past restrictions imposed by the need to enhance the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, the freeze on recruitment and the reduction in posts, he considered that the situation had changed and that it was no longer possible to justify not keeping the Secretariat's promises.

29. With respect to the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/46/377), he acknowledged the progress made towards increasing the number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution and reaffirmed the need to respect fully the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in conformity with General Assembly resolutions 45/125 and 45/239 C. To that end, it was necessary to recruit a larger number of women from developing countries to fill vacant posts at the senior and policy-formulating levels.

30. His delegation regretted the cases of the abduction, detention and killing of international officials as a result of the actions of certain Member States which did not respect their privileges and immunities. He also noted that some Member States did not observe section 18 (b), article V, of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations which provided that officials of the United Nations should be exempt from taxation on the salaries and emoluments paid to them by the Organization.

31. Mr. BAZAN (Chile) pointed out the need to make maximum use of the qualities and abilities of United Nations officials and expressed concern at the low morale among the staff. Member States were largely responsible for that and had a duty to remedy the situation.

32. He was grateful to the Secretary-General for maintaining the excellent standards of the Secretariat staff at a time when there was an increasingly acute shortage of financial resources, and to the staff members themselves for their professionalism, dedication and sacrifices.

33. When appointing Secretariat staff, it was important to maintain the principles of efficiency, competence and integrity laid down in the Charter. The Secretary-General had made laudable efforts to ensure that, while observing those criteria, the aspiration of Member States for equitable representation should be met and women should achieve appropriate representation.

34. With regard to the desirable ranges for the geographical distribution of staff in the Professional category and above, it was essential to attach more importance to membership than to any other factor and to ensure that every country had the possibility of its nationals filling posts subject to geographical distribution.

35. His delegation reiterated the advisability of considering the establishment of a tribunal to which it would be possible to appeal against judgements of the Administrative Tribunal, because article 11 of its Statute did confer that power on the Committee on Applications for Review of Administrative Tribunal Judgements. That would provide a forum for appeals by United Nations staff. He looked forward with interest to the report on the subject to be submitted by the Secretary-General at the forty-seventh session.

36. Mr. KARBUCZKY (Hungary) said that personnel questions could be better examined biennially, because that would allow longer-term trends to be examined. His delegation noted with satisfaction the increase in the number of Hungarians working for the United Nations, but pointed out that the highest ranking was merely at the P-4 level. Among the numerous candidates presented by Hungary, there must be persons qualified to occupy much higher posts as well.

37. When recruiting for a vacant post, the Secretariat considered the qualifications of the candidate and the representation of the country from which the candidate came. The group of countries from which the candidate came was outside the scope of the process. Presenting statistics relating to the composition of the Secretariat according to a simple alphabetical list of Member States was therefore preferable to presenting them according to groups of countries, because, although that system showed a relatively even representation of developing and other countries, it hid drastic differences within any given group.

(Mr. Karbuczky, Hungary)

38. Despite the increase in the representation of women in the Secretariat in both relative and absolute terms, the percentage of Eastern European women remained very low. He pointed out with some satisfaction, that almost 50 per cent of the Hungarian staff members in the Secretariat were women.

39. With regard to the desirable ranges for the geographical distribution of staff in the Professional and higher categories, the major factors must be membership and contribution, and any drastic change in their current relative weightings should be avoided. Since the population factor was already taken into consideration when calculating the scale of assessments of Member States, its weighting should be limited so as to avoid any duplication of its effect.

40. With regard to paragraph 15 of document A/C.5/46/4, which summarized an exchange of communications between the Secretariat and the Permanent Mission of Hungary with regard to the taxation of international officials, his Government was waiting for clarification from the Secretariat regarding the persons involved in order to ascertain whether the provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations were relevant to the case in question.

41. The proposals of the Secretary-General on secondment from government service contained in document A/C.5/46/9 would help to establish a truly independent international civil service, but in order to achieve a lasting and satisfactory solution it would be necessary to take into consideration the interests of all three parties, namely, the Organization, staff members and Member States. Hungarians could accept the type of contract most beneficial to the Organization, bearing in mind that a combination of permanent and fixed-term contracts would probably be the best solution. Unlike previous years, only 33 per cent of the Hungarians currently employed by the United Nations were on fixed-term contracts, and none of them at the insistence of the Government.

42. As to whether the right to replacement should be retained or "normal" recruitment and placement procedures should prevail was puzzling, since the practice of replacement was authorized by General Assembly resolution 35/210, while the so-called "normal" vacancy management was criticized to such an extent that it was hard to know what "normal" meant.

43. One of the first competitive examinations for posts at the P-3 level had been held in Hungary. Early results were promising, and Hungary welcomed the Secretariat's intention to expand the scope of those examinations. Since the majority of recruitments to P-1, P-2 and P-3 posts in recent years had occurred through such examinations, his delegation wished to see the whole process of planning and holding examinations and the placement of successful candidates better coordinated. It was to be hoped that the proposed redeployment would enable the Examination and Tests Section to carry out its increased responsibilities in that regard.

44. Ms. MOSS (Bahamas) said that only if the Secretariat, delegations and Governments of Member States played their part in ensuring implementation of the principle of equitable geographical distribution could the goals of the United Nations Charter be realized: the Secretariat must analyse the problems of the United Nations system and establish guidelines for solving them; delegations must present the needs and concerns of their countries and formulate recommendations for remedying inequalities; and, lastly, Governments must prepare candidates to enable the Secretariat to maintain the highest standards of efficiency. While the Secretariat and delegations had fulfilled their obligations, it looked as if the Governments of some unrepresented or underrepresented countries had been unable to produce candidates with the necessary professional qualifications, while, conversely, candidates who were properly qualified had sometimes been overlooked. The Secretariat could help correct both problems by organizing training programmes in unrepresented or underrepresented countries to acquaint their Governments with issues pertaining to the international civil service.

45. Recruitment should be based on two considerations: the need for equitable representation of all Member States at all levels of the Secretariat and the principle that appointments must be based on the candidate's having appropriate qualifications for the job. Consequently, the Secretariat must not apply rigid procedures or impose conditions that would automatically exclude many young people and candidates from developing countries: factors such as experience, age, background and capability should not be regarded as exclusive criteria; candidates must be given the opportunity to prove themselves through on-the-job training, but without any lowering of standards.

46. The practice of secondment had advantages and disadvantages; it certainly permitted the recruitment of experienced and professionally qualified staff and helped to maintain a balance between fixed-term and career appointments, but it could also give the impression that United Nations staff were not truly independent and responsible only to the Secretary-General. It should be pointed out in that connection that Governments that persuaded national officials to work for international organizations by supplementing their salary were violating the principle of equal pay for equal work and compromising the independence of those officials, contrary to the provisions of Article 100 of the Charter. Apart from that potential danger and the fact that secondment involved more frequent rotation of staff members, resulting in higher administrative costs and loss of efficiency, the advantages of secondment outweighed its disadvantages, and it should be used as long as the Organization maintained a permanent core of highly qualified personnel.

47. Her delegation was concerned that Governments were neglecting their duty regarding the safety and protection of international staff, particularly in view of the Organization's growing operational activities. As increasing numbers of staff were working in troubled areas, Governments must be urged to respect the privileges and immunities of United Nations staff, who in turn must be urged to observe the laws of Member States while carrying out their duties.

(Ms. Moss, Bahamas)

48. Bearing in mind that the United Nations was at the forefront of efforts for the advancement of women, it was paradoxical that women's position in the Organization was a mere reflection of the situation within Member States: efforts had yielded quantitative rather than qualitative results, and even quantitative progress had been slow; according to available statistics, the situation at the higher levels of the Secretariat was particularly unsatisfactory. Although qualifications must be the deciding criterion in recruitment and promotion, affirmative action programmes favouring women must continue until established targets had been attained, while highly technical organizations, which had the greatest difficulty in recruiting women, should consider outreach training programmes. Career development was another realm in which the situation of women needed improvement, so that their progress up the career ladder might be as rapid as that of their male colleagues. In that context, she welcomed the Secretary-General's approval of recommendations of the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women concerning the promotion, assignment and recruitment of women.

49. In considering personnel questions there were three main issues: the first was the distribution of higher-level posts; in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/239, those posts should not be considered "the exclusive preserve" of any Member State. The Secretary-General should therefore be requested to take every available measure to ensure the equitable representation of Member States at the senior and policy-making levels of the Secretariat, particularly in the case of developing countries and Member States inadequately represented at those levels. The second problem was the formulas for "desirable ranges" for Member States; her delegation would accept any of the alternatives under consideration, provided it was workable; however, every effort should be made to implement existing procedures fully before any new proposals were adopted. The third issue concerned the possibility of increasing the number of posts subject to geographical distribution; that would require a cautious approach, taking budgetary considerations into account and bearing in mind that an increase in the number of posts would not automatically guarantee equitable distribution. Existing imbalances must first be corrected.

50. She had refrained from mentioning her own country's underrepresentation because she believed that if the broad preoccupations she had referred to were addressed, the situation of The Bahamas would be resolved. It was the Committee's responsibility to make recommendations that would form the basis for a plan of action for a Secretariat structure which reflected the principles and provisions of the Charter.

51. Mr. SENA CARDOSO (Brazil) said that although Brazil's representation in the Secretariat had thus far been lower than expected and desired, his delegation had noted in the past few months a greater interest among Brazilian professionals in the activities of the Organization and career prospects in the international civil service. He therefore hoped that candidates selected in the competitive examinations held in Brazil in 1990 would soon be filling vacancies as they arose.

(Mr. Sena Cardoso, Brazil)

52. Brazil, which had generally been underrepresented, noted with satisfaction the efforts that had been made to correct the underrepresentation of certain Member States in posts subject to equitable geographical distribution.

53. His delegation would support all measures aimed at bringing Member States participation as close as possible to the mid-point of their desirable range. However, there was room for improvement in the formula used in calculating the desirable ranges: greater justice would be done if the 7.2 per cent weight attributed to the population factor was restored. His delegation wholeheartedly endorsed the proposal by the representative of India in his statement on the agenda item before the Committee.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.